



Constantly Eating and Pointing with Councilmember Constant

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, July 21, 2008

City Hall Diary

After finishing lunch at Pollo Loco on Winchester Blvd., Councilmember Pete Constant took me on a District 1 tour. District 6 and District 1 share a long border along Winchester. Recently, both of our council offices have been working with the RDA and small businesses to help build a larger business district for Winchester.

We started off on Cadillac and Impala Streets in the Winchester SNI. As in Hoffman Via Monte in District 10, I saw more "stacking" of the 1970s apartment structures that have "out-of-town owners" who neglect their buildings, negatively affecting the neighborhood. Two homicides occurred in this west side area recently.

Driving down Eden Ave. (which is parallel to Winchester), we looked at some of the traffic calming devices installed by the RDA aimed at slowing cars down on this street. However, one of the roundabouts was removed because local residents did not want it there after it was installed. It is tough to make everyone happy.

We then checked out the community policing station in a converted office building and the Calabazas library that will soon be closing to be remodeled (watch out to not hit your head in the bathroom).

Next, we visited San Jose's only BMX park, a place where youths can show off their tricks and get some air. We chatted with some kids who told us of their love of the park. I'll bet it looked pretty peculiar to see the two of us chatting it up with "bikers." I told the kids not to talk to strangers next time.

Then we visited the Starbird Youth Center at Starbird Park, a newly built facility that took "green building" much too literally by not installing air conditioning! On hot days, youths sit outside the NEW

facility. This center is just down the street from Waterbury Ct. and Boynton, where there was another homicide.

Now don't get me wrong, District 1 is not just apartments and tragic homicides. It is filled with many single family homes, including both starter and expensive houses. It also has a few really big parks, like Rainbow Park, and awesome schools, like Lynbrook High.

The most bizarre thing about District 1 is the border it shares with Campbell, Cupertino, Santa Clara and Saratoga. As we drove, Constant constantly pointed out, "this side is San Jose and that side is Saratoga" or "Cupertino that side, San Jose this side." Throughout the tour along the border, I was extremely pleased at the amount of commercial land San Jose was able to maintain on the city's western edge. This is the reverse of the San Jose-Milpitas border, with Milpitas capturing most of the sales tax of San Jose residents.

However, it is pretty clear that some cities actually "get it" when it comes to signage for retail. The most obvious example is the Stevens Creek Auto Row. One side is San Jose and the other Santa Clara. Santa Clara has HUGE signs where the car brands are easily visible from a distance, versus the San Jose side, which has Lilliputian signs. No wonder Constant wanted to include areas other than downtown in the sign ordinance.

We finished our tour with a ribbon cutting in my district for a new furniture store on Bascom Ave., where we shared in a feast of food.

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